

distinctness between the identified groups or shown that a burden exists in searching all the claims.

In regard to Groups I and II, the Office has characterized the relationship between these two groups as "process of making and product made." Citing MPEP §806.05(f), the Office suggests the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process "with ultra-low C steel". However, this statement is not correct. The carbon content of the claimed steel strip and that of the steel strip used in the claimed process are exactly the same. Accordingly, the claimed steel strip can not be made by a process with ultra-low C steel. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the Restriction Requirement is unsustainable, and it should therefore be withdrawn.

Further, Applicants respectfully traverse the Restriction Requirement on the grounds that the Office has not shown that a burden exist in searching all of the claims. The Office cannot reasonably assert that a burden exists in searching only two subclasses.


Accordingly, and for the reasons presented above, Applicants submit that the Office has failed to meet the burden necessary in order to sustain the Restriction Requirement. Withdrawal of the Restriction Requirement is respectfully requested.

Finally, Applicants note that MPEP §821.04 states, "if applicant elects claims directed to the product, and a product claim is subsequently found allowable, withdrawn process claims which depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the allowable product claim will be rejoined." Applicants respectfully submit that should the elected group be found allowable, non-elected claims 1-8 should be rejoined.

Applicants respectfully submit that the above-identified application is now in condition for examination on the merits, and early notice of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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